

SOUTHEAST NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOL OF EXCELLENCE

2009-2010 Performance Analysis

Core Question 2: Is the organization effective and well-run?

2.1. Is the school in sound fiscal health?	
STANDARD	The school presents significant concerns in no more than <u>one</u> of the following areas: a) its state financial audits (e.g., presence of “significant findings”); b) its financial staffing and systems; c) its success in achieving a balanced budget over the past three years; d) the adequacy of its projections of revenues and expenses for the next three years; e) its fulfillment of financial reporting requirements under Sections 10 and 17 of the charter agreement. In addition, if the school presents significant concerns in one area, it has a credible plan for addressing the concern that has been approved by the Mayor’s Office.

2009-10 Performance: Meets Standard

SENSE has established adequate staffing and systems for managing the school’s finances and regularly meets its reporting deadlines in a timely and accurate manner and fulfills its financial reporting requirements.

The school was audited by the Indiana State Board of Accounts (SBOA) covering the timeframe of July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2009. The report included unqualified opinions from the SBOA that the school generally follows the required accounting rules appropriately and none of the findings related to the school’s financial management and accounting systems were deemed significant. The examination outlined only one finding related to the school’s statements indicating they lacked some internal controls over the receipting, disbursing, recording and accounting for their financial activities. SENSE implemented a corrective action plan as of March 1, 2010 which indicated the treasurer and CEO of the Corporation would review and approve all claims before payment is made to avoid errors or invalid vendor payment transactions.

The Mayor’s Office contracts with an independent accounting firm to complete annual financial performance reviews of each school. Based on a review of SENSE’s finances for 2009-10, the Mayor’s Office found that the school successfully achieved a balanced budget with a surplus and ended the fiscal year with adequate cash and investments. Thus, the school meets standard for this indicator.

2.2. Are the school’s student enrollment, attendance, and retention rates strong?	
STANDARD	The school is consistently fully enrolled. Student attendance and retention rates are generally at or above the school’s agreed-upon target rates.

2009-10 Performance: Approaching Standard

SENSE met its enrollment target for 2009-10. The following chart displays the school's target enrollment compared with its official fall enrollment, as reported by the IDOE.

Year	Target Enrollment	Fall Enrollment	Percent Below
2009-10	280	280	N/A

Source: Official fall enrollment figures from the IDOE. Target enrollment is the maximum capacity from the school's charter agreement with the Mayor's Office, submitted by the school.

The 2009-10 the attendance rate at SENSE was below the averages of both the county and the state.

	SENSE	MC	IN
2009-10 Attendance rate	94.10%	95.70%	95.90%

No targets have been established for student retention rates for SENSE. The school retained 86.8% of the students enrolled in the Fall of 2008, excluding those who aged out of the school.

Years	Students Enrolled Initial Year	Students Re-enrolled Following Year	Retention Rate
Fall 2008 to Fall 2009	228	198	86.8%

Source: Mayor's Office analysis of Student Residence report submitted to the IDOE and the Mayor's Office by the school. Students in the 6th Grade class excluded from analysis. Enrollment numbers differ from official IDOE enrollment figures due to this exclusion.

Based on the 2009-10 performance, SENSE is approaching the Mayor's Office standard for this indicator because they were fully enrolled but had an attendance rate lower than that of both the state and county.

2.3. Is the school's Board active and competent in its oversight?	
STANDARD	The Board's membership collectively contributes a broad skill set and fair representation of the community; Board members are knowledgeable about the school; roles and responsibilities of the Board are clearly delineated; Board meetings reflect thoughtful discussion and progress in the consideration of issues; overall, the Board provides consistent and competent stewardship of the school.

2009-10 Performance: Meets Standard

The board of directors at Southeast Neighborhood School of Excellence (SENSE) are knowledgeable about the school and provide consistent and constant oversight of the school.

The Board is comprised of members with a diverse range of professional expertise and extensive knowledge about the school, its policies and its issues of concern.

The Mayor's Office regularly attends board meetings and examines minutes of meetings held by the board. At meetings, the board generally makes quorum and actively engages in the oversight of many aspects of school operations, including financial management, academic achievement, curriculum, professional development, programming, and extra-curricular activities.

There are some areas of concern regarding board retention and board development. The school's board has had a total of three of its members resign since February 2010 unrelated to board membership term limits. As a result, SENSE added a few new members in 2009-10 who represent the local community and add to the collective skill set of the Board. Board meeting minutes are clear and well organized. Based on the performance demonstrated in the 2009-10 academic year, the Board at SENSE meets the Mayor's Office standard for this indicator.

2.4. Is there a high level of parent satisfaction with the school?	
STANDARD	More than 80% but less than 90% of parents surveyed indicate that they are satisfied overall with the school.

2009-10 Performance: Does Not Meet Standard

In the spring of each year, researchers administer anonymous surveys to parents of students enrolled at Mayor-sponsored charter schools. In 2009-10, 92% of SENSE parents reported overall satisfaction with the school. According to the data, the school exceeds the Mayor's Office standard for performance for this indicator for the 2009-10 academic year.

2.5. Is the school administration strong in its academic and organizational leadership?	
STANDARD	The school's leadership a) has sufficient academic and/or business expertise; b) has been sufficiently stable over time; c) has clearly defined roles and responsibilities among leaders and between leaders and the Board; d) actively engages in a process of continuous improvement which has led to some mid-course corrections.

2009-10 Performance: Approaching Standard

The administration at SENSE has undergone a transition in leadership. The founding principal and assistant principal resigned during 2009-10, and an interim school leader was hired in January 2010. One area of concern for the school is the development of an effective school leadership transition or mentorship program. Much of the instructional and organizational leadership, as well as critical institutional knowledge at SENSE, resided with the school's founding principal. The interim principal was not in place for a full academic year before his term ended with the school.

Just prior to the conclusion of the 2009-10 school year, the Board of Directors at SENSE hired a new permanent school leader and promoted a long-time staff member to serve as the assistant leader. Both the new administrators have academic expertise.

While the school has selected a permanent school leadership team, how the school will prepare for any possible transitions in the future is unclear. Regardless of whether the current administrators' plans are to remain with the school short- or long-term, the school's capacity to effectively transition leadership is shortcoming.

Therefore, for 2009-10, leadership at the school is approaching the Mayor's Office standard for this indicator.

2.6. Is the school meeting its school-specific organizational and management performance goals?	
Meets standard	School has clearly met its school-specific organizational goal.

Not applicable. SENSE did not have school-specific organizational and management performance goals that were evaluated in 2009-10.